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ABSTRACT

In 1984-85, the third year of its operation, New York City's Transition Program for Refugee Children (T.P.R.C.) provided funds to 42 public and four non-public schools (each having five or more refugee students). T.P.R.C. provides classes in English as a second language (E.S.L.) and/or content-area instruction with the E.S.L. approach specifically designed to improve English language skills. The program also attempted to acclimate students to American life and culture. Student achievement test results based on Criterion Referenced English Syntax Test (CREST) scores for 1984-85 found that T.P.R.C. students are generally progressing in their knowledge of reading and in mathematics at the same rate as the national norms and exceeded the city-wide criteria of one CREST objective per month of instruction. Students are doing well despite the fact that, while funding for the 1984-85 academic year was decreased by 40 percent compared to the 1983-84 year, the number of participants nearly doubled. (KH)

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THE TRANSITION PROGRAM FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN 1984-1985

OEA Evaluation Report

O.E.A. Evaluation Report

Project Number: 5001-56-64260

THE TRANSITION PROGRAM FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN 1984-1985

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THE TRANSITION PROGRAM FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN

Year of Operation:	1984-85, third year of funding
Central Administration:	High School Projects Bay Ridge HS Annex 1171 65th Street Brooklyn, New York 11219
Number of Participants:	1483 students in grades 9 to 12
Participating Sites:	46 high schools in New York City (42 public, 4 private)
Contact Person:	Eli Plotkin, Program Manager H.S. Bilingual/E.S.L. Schools Division of High Schools New York City Public Schools

I. OVERVIEW

In its third year of operation, the Transition Program for Refugee Children (T.P.R.C.) continued to provide classes in English as a second language (E.S.L.) or content-area instruction with an E.S.L. approach specifically designed to improve participating students' English language listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities. The program also attempted to acclimate students to American life and culture.

Federal funding under the Refugee Act, which totaled $74,864, was provided on a per capita formula based on the number of New York City students identified as refugees. However, the number of refugee students served by the program is greater than the number on which funding was based, since many otherwise eligible students were reported to lack proper certification. School personnel reported 1483 refugees in the 46 schools with

TABLE 1

Number of Program Students by Site*

School	Number of Students
Seward Park	37
Martin L. King	64
Park West	48
Washington Irving	46
George Washington	7
Louis D. Brandeis	19
Lower East Side Prep	75
C. Columbus	66
Walton	83
T. Roosevelt	148
Herbert H. Lehman	14
DeWitt Clinton	21
J. F. Kennedy	47
Midwood	27
New Utrecht	20
Fort Hamilton	20
Franklin D. Roosevelt	99
Lafayette	10
Abraham Lincoln	16
Franklin K. Lane	3
James Madison	35
Eastern District	10
Canarsie	3
South Shore	6
John Dewey	13
Long Island City	7
Newtown	180
John Bowne	27
Forest Hills	11
W.C. Bryant	95
Flushing	38
Far Rockaway	87
Richmond Hill	3
Hillcrest	5
Grover Cleveland	43
Port Richmond	8
Curtis	4
Non-Public Schools	41
TOTAL	1486

*Data are available for 37 public schools and 2 non-public schools.

the largest populations. Funds were distributed according to the original estimate of the refugee population as follows:

---Seventy-three thousand seven hundred forty one dollars in instructional materials were distributed per capita to the 42 public and 4 non-public schools that had five or more refugee students.

Four schools (Newtown, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt and William C. Bryant) had the largest populations of refugee students. Their combined total of 522 represents 35 percent of the total number of students reported. Table 1 presents the number of program students by site, and Table 2 presents a breakdown of the students by grade.

TABLE 2

Number of Program Students by Grade

Grade	Number of Students
9	399
10	591
11	335
12	158
TOTAL	1483

Program students were in grades nine through twelve; however, more were in the tenth grade (591) than the other grades. Relatively few students (158) were in the twelfth grade.

II. FINDINGS

This section presents the assessment instruments and procedures, and the test results used to evaluate student achievement in 1984-85. The data set for the Transition Program for Refugee Children was assembled by matching a Division of High Schools roster of participating students to the Office of Educational Assessment high school data base containing Criterion Reference English Syntax Test (CREST) scores and the New York City Reading and Mathematics Test scores. Of the 785 students in the program who were not yet eligible for testing with the New York City Reading and Mathematics Test, complete CREST data were available for 595 students in the fall and 554 in the spring. Complete New York City Reading and Mathematics Test data were available for 616 of the 701 students eligible to take the test in the fall and spring. Thus, data were available for 1211 students.

ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH SYNTAX

The CREST, used to measure English language achievement, was developed by the New York City Public Schools to measure mastery of the E.S.L. curriculum objectives at the high school level. It is the instrument used to assess English language acquisition in Chapter I High School E.S.L. programs in New York City. There are four items for each objective, and mastery of an objective is achieved when three of these items are answered correctly. This test has three levels: beginning (I), intermediate (II), and

advanced (III). The maximum score on Levels I and II is 25, while the maximum score on Level III is 15.

The city-wide objective for Chapter I E.S.L. students is the mastery of one CREST objective for every four weeks of school attendance. The test was administered to T.P.R.C. students at the beginning and end of each semester. Mean differences between pre-test and post-test were calculated to represent the gain score. Since the test's levels are not equated vertically, it was impossible to measure gains for students who changed levels. Extensive information on CREST objectives and psychometric properties appear in the Technical Manual, New York City English as a Second Language Criterion Referenced English Syntax Test.*

Examination of Table 3 reveals that students met the objective in both fall (1.99 objectives per month) and spring (1.88 objectives per month). Students tested on Levels I and II mastered over two objectives per month of attendance in the fall term. Those students tested on these same levels in the spring also mastered over two objectives per month. Students tested on Level III gained approximately 1.2 objectives per month of attendance during both fall and spring terms.

Students tested on Levels I, II, and III therefore, exceeded city-wide guidelines which call for a gain of one CREST objective for every month of attendance.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN READING AND MATHEMATICS

For refugee students, academic performance in English reading and mathematics was assessed through the use of

TABLE 3

Results of the Criterion Referenced English Syntax Test

(T.P.R.C. Students Pre- and Post-Tested on Same Test Level)

Test Level	Number of Students	Average Number of Objectives Mastered Pre	Post	Objectives Mastered*	Average Months of Treatment	Objectives Mastered Per Month
			FALL			
I	203	15.41	20.74	5.33	2.07	2.57
II	224	12.26	16.82	3.44	2.07	2.19
III	168	6.02	8.58	2.55	2.07	1.23
TOTAL	595	11.57	15.83	4.25	2.07	1.99
			SPRING			
I	133	13.85	18.24	4.39	2.01	2.18
II	209	12.07	16.51	4.45	2.01	2.21
III	212	6.14	8.65	2.51	2.01	1.25
TOTAL	554	10.23	13.92	3.69	2.01	1.88

*Post-test minus pre-test.

standardized tests. The New York City Reading Test (the California Achievement Test and the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, (given in alternate years) and the New York City Mathematics Test, a New York normed version of the Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK), were used to measure achievement in these areas. All students were tested on grade level. Raw scores were converted to Normal Curve Equivalent (N.C.E.) scores, which are normalized standard scores. They have the advantage of forming an equal interval scale so that scores and gains can be averaged. For the norming population, N.C.E.s have a mean of 50, a standard deviation of approximately 20, and a range from 1 to 99.

READING ACHIEVEMENT

Raw scores on the English test were converted to N.C.E.s. Correlated t-tests were computed on pretest and posttest N.C.E.s to determine students' improvement in English.

On the pretest, the overall mean N.C.E. score was 21.2. The mean posttest score was 20.2. Although there was a decrease in scores across testings, the mean difference (-1) was not statistically significant. Overall, students are progressing at the same rate as the national sample used to norm the test.

A second correlated t-test was computed on the English N.C.E. scores for each grade. Presented in Table 4 are the results of this analysis.

The mean difference between pre-test and post-test scores for tenth graders was statistically significant indicating that

students are progressing at a greater rate than the national sample used to norm the test. These students improved improved significantly on the reading test. N.C.E. scores on this test decreased significantly for eleventh graders. Ninth and twelfth graders' scores did not change from pre-test to post-test which indicate that they are progressing at the same rate as the nationwide sample used to norm the tests.

MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT

The mathematics portion of the test emphasizes arithmetic and numeric concepts and applications with minor emphasis on algebra, geometry, and measurement. The TASK, which has two forms, is a two-level test. Level I is designed for grades eight, nine, and ten; Level II for grades eleven and twelve and junior college level. The TASK was normed on two national samples.*

Correlated t-tests were calculated for the 616 students for whom both pretest and posttest scores were available. This analysis determines whether the difference between mean pretest and mean posttest scores is larger than would be expected by chance variation alone.

Students scored an average of 37.0 on the pretest and 37.9 on the posttest. Results of the t-test indicate that the mean difference between the two tests (.9) was not statistically significant for the 616 students combined.

*Further information is available from the Psychological Corporation, 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, Ohio 44130.

TABLE 4

Reading Achievement:
Significance of the Total Normal Curve Equivalent (N.C.E.) Differences Between Initial and Final Test Scores of Students on the New York City Reading Test, by Grade

Grade	N	Pre-Test Mean	Pre-Test S.D.	Post-Test Mean	Post-Test S.D.	Mean Difference	S.D.
9	122	16.6	11.8	17.3	13.1	.7	13.2
10	219	20.9	14.4	23.1	14.7	2.2	14.1*
11	190	21.1	10.9	14.6	12.2	-6.5	12.9*
12	85	29.1	15.0	29.7	18.9	.6	20.7
TOTAL	616	21.9	13.4	21.1	15.2	-1.0	15.1

*Statisitically significant at the .05 level.

Another correlated t-test was computed on mathematics scores (N.C.E.) for each grade level. Results of this analysis are presented in Table 5.

Differences between pre-test and post-test N.C.E. scores did not differ significantly for students in grades nine, ten, and eleven. Twelfth graders however, scored significantly lower on the post-test.

TABLE 5

Mathematics Achievement:

Significance of the Normal Curve Equivalent (N.C.E.) Differences Between Initial and Final Test Scores of Students on the New York City Mathematics Test, by Grade

Grade	N	Pre-Test Mean	Pre-Test S. D.	Post-Test Mean	Post-Test S. D.	Mean Difference	S.D.
9	122	29.9	16.8	30.2	19.7	.2	18.2
10	219	35.6	17.8	37.2	20.4	1.6	16.2
11	190	40.2	16.2	41.0	21.3	.8	21.1
12	85	43.4	19.0	36.6	21.8	-4.8*	22.5
TOTAL	616	37.2	17.8	36.3	21.1	.2	19.3

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The available data suggest that, in the third year of funding, T.P.R.C. students who are eligible for testing with the NYC Reading and Mathematics Tests are generally progressing in their knowledge of reading and in mathematics at the same rate as the sample on which the national norms are based. Students in Chapter I English as a second language classes of the CREST exceeded the city-wide criteria of one CREST objective per month of instruction.

Funding for the 1984-85 academic year was decreased by 40 percent compared to the 1983-84 academic year, and the number of participants nearly doubled. Despite these circumstances, T.P.R.C. students are doing very well. However, adequate provision of funding would improve the planning and implementation of services to T.P.R.C. students.